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ABSTRACT

The problem was a study of the content found in five commonly offered basic business courses in secondary schools to determine whether the subject matter in each course is sufficiently unique to justify the continued offering of the current series of courses or whether the content is so repetitious that further consideration of the consolidation of content into fewer courses is warranted. The source of data was the narratives found in the latest editions of 10 basic business textbooks published by two companies which offered a separate text for each course. The techniques of the content analysis research method were used. Topics were selected as the units of analysis. Six topical categories, called nuclear topics, were identified as forming the nuclei of basic business content: business problems topics, money management topics, business management topics, legal topics, economic topics, and miscellaneous topics. Fifteen additional categories, called contiguous topics, were formed using the possible combinations of nuclear topics. The findings revealed that extensive overlap existed among the topical categories in the texts. It was concluded that further consideration should be given to consolidating the content into fewer courses. (Author)

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A STUDY OF THE CONTENT IN SELECTED TEXTBOOKS FOR THE COMMONLY OFFERED BASIC BUSINESS COURSES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Doctor of Philosophy
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A STUDY OF THE CONTENT IN SELECTED TEXTBOOKS FOR THE COMMONLY OFFERED BASIC BUSINESS COURSES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Introduction

While the origin of basic business education is unclear, Sluder (1) reports that the first textbook for this subject area was published in 1903 and that the number of basic business courses and textbooks took a sharp increase in the 1920's. Today, five basic business courses are commonly offered in secondary schools: general business, consumer economics, business principles and management, business law, and economics.

An issue has persisted in the literature for over a quarter of a century as to whether basic business education should continue to be offered in the multiple-course series or should be consolidated into fewer courses. This issue was investigated by Hayden (2), Gratz (3), and Hitzelberger and Hollinseed (4). In 1950, Hayden reported that a majority of business educators favored the continuation of the series of basic business courses. By 1961, however, Gratz found that the majority of business educators favored the consolidation of basic-business courses. Hitzelberger and Hollinseed found that business education teachers also favored the consolidation of basic business courses.

Statement of the Problem

The problem was a comprehensive study of the content in the five commonly offered basic business courses to determine whether the content in each basic business course is sufficiently unique to justify the continued offering of the current series of courses or whether the content is so repetitious that further consideration of the consolidation of content into fewer courses is warranted.

Rationale of the Study

While arguments to support the opinions of those who believe that basic business education should continue to be offered as a series of separate courses and of those who believe it should be integrated into fewer courses vary from writer to writer and are scattered throughout the literature, certain inferences supporting each of the positions can be drawn. These inferences provide a frame of reference reflecting the polarization of thought for each side of the issue.

Areas of Agreement

Both those who favor a series of separate basic business courses and those who favor a consolidation of basic business courses tend to agree that an empirical analysis indicates five general areas of study form the nuclei of the subject matter in the five basic business courses. These areas, as suggested by the course titles, are:

1. the business problems areas of basic business
2. the legal areas of basic business
3. the economic areas of basic business
4. the money management areas of basic business
5. the business management areas of basic business

These appear to have had their origins in well-defined fields of study or disciplines. Thus, in the study, these areas are referred to as nuclear generic areas to connote that they form the nuclei of basic business content and that they had their geneses in established fields of study.

A second characteristic of basic business content on which the proponents on each side of the issue agree is that complex relationships exist among the five nuclear generic areas. Thus, a second type of content found in the field of basic business deals with the contiguous associations inherent among the five nuclear generic areas. These contiguous relationships are:

A. Relationships of the business problems areas to the other nuclear generic areas:

   1. the legal aspects of the business problems areas
   2. the economic aspects of the business problems areas
   3. the money management aspects of the business problems areas
   4. the business management aspects of the business problems areas

B. Relationships of the legal areas to the other nuclear generic areas:

   1. the business problems aspects of the legal areas
   2. the economic aspects of the legal areas
   3. the money management aspects of the legal areas
   4. the business management aspects of the legal areas

C. Relationships of the economic areas to the other nuclear generic areas:

   1. the business problems aspects of the economic areas
   2. the legal aspects of the economic areas
   3. the money management aspects of the economic areas
   4. the business management aspects of the economic areas

D. Relationships of the money management areas to the other nuclear generic areas:

   1. the business problems aspects of the money management areas
   2. the legal aspects of the money management areas
   3. the economic aspects of the money management areas
   4. the business management aspects of the money management areas

E. Relationships of the business management areas to the other nuclear generic areas:

   1. the business problems aspects of the business management areas
   2. the legal aspects of the business management areas
   3. the economic aspects of the business management areas
   4. the money management aspects of the business management areas

The twenty contiguous associations are called contiguous generic areas to connote the areas of basic business content generated by the close proximity and interrelatedness of the nuclear generic areas. Figure 1 summarizes the two types of content in basic business--the five nuclear generic areas and the twenty contiguous generic areas.

Areas of Disagreement

While the proponents of the differing views on this issue generally agree on the characteristics of the global content in the basic business field, there is less agreement about the characteristics of the content within and among the basic business courses. More specifically, they seem to differ on their perceptions of (1) what constitutes the content of each basic business course and (2) the nature and extent of overlap which occurs within and among the courses.

For those who argue that basic business education in the secondary schools should continue to be offered as a series of separate courses, the content in each course is thought to be highly unique. Basic business is envisioned as having five nuclear generic areas with each constituting the nucleus of a single and separate course. The nuclear areas and the corresponding courses are:

Nuclear Generic Areas	Corresponding Basic Business Course
business problems areas	general business
legal areas	business law
economic areas	economics
money management areas	consumer economics
business management areas	business principles and management

Each course is viewed as having four contiguous generic areas. The overall structure of the content in the field of basic business education as pictured by the proponents of the basic business series of separate courses is shown in Figure 2. Each horizontal row of the grid constitutes the content of a single, separate course--each having one nuclear area and four contiguous areas.

On the other hand, those who argue that basic business education in the secondary schools should consist of fewer and consolidated courses view the content in each course as having the same common nuclear and contiguous generic areas. Each course includes content pertaining to all five nuclear generic areas and all twenty contiguous generic areas. From this point of view, the overall structure of the content in the field of basic business can be represented by a three dimensional grid as shown in Figure 3.

Arguments for Multiple Basic Business Course Offerings

Those who argue that basic business should continue to be a series of separate courses would contend that the overlap in basic business content is mainly within courses. Such overlap is necessary and meaningful. They would contend that the vast majority of content falls in the nuclear generic areas for each course rather than in the contiguous areas. Thus, the global picture of basic business education content should show the bulk of the content falling in the five nuclear generic areas with a lesser amount in the contiguous generic areas.

	BUSINESS PROBLEMS AREAS	LEGAL AREAS	ECONOMIC AREAS	MONEY MANAGEMENT AREAS	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AREAS
BUSINESS PROBLEMS AREAS	Business Problems Area	Legal Aspects of Business Problems Area	Economic Aspects of Business Problems Area	Money Management Aspects of Business Problems Area	Business Management Aspects of Business Problems Area
LEGAL AREAS	Business Problems Aspects of Legal Area	Legal Area	Economic Aspects of Legal Area	Money Management Aspects of Legal Area	Business Management Aspects of Legal Area
ECONOMIC AREAS	Business Problems Aspects of Economic Area	Legal Aspects of Economic Area	Economic Area	Money Management Aspects of Economic Area	Business Management Aspects of Economic Area
MONEY MANAGEMENT AREAS	Business Problems Aspects of Money Management Area	Legal Aspects of Money Management Area	Economic Aspects of Money Management Area	Money Management Area	Business Management Aspects of Money Management Area
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AREAS	Business Problems Aspects of Business Management Area	Legal Aspects of Business Management Area	Economic Aspects of Business Management Area	Money Management Aspects of Business Management Area	Business Management Area

Nuclear Generic Areas Contiguous Generic Areas

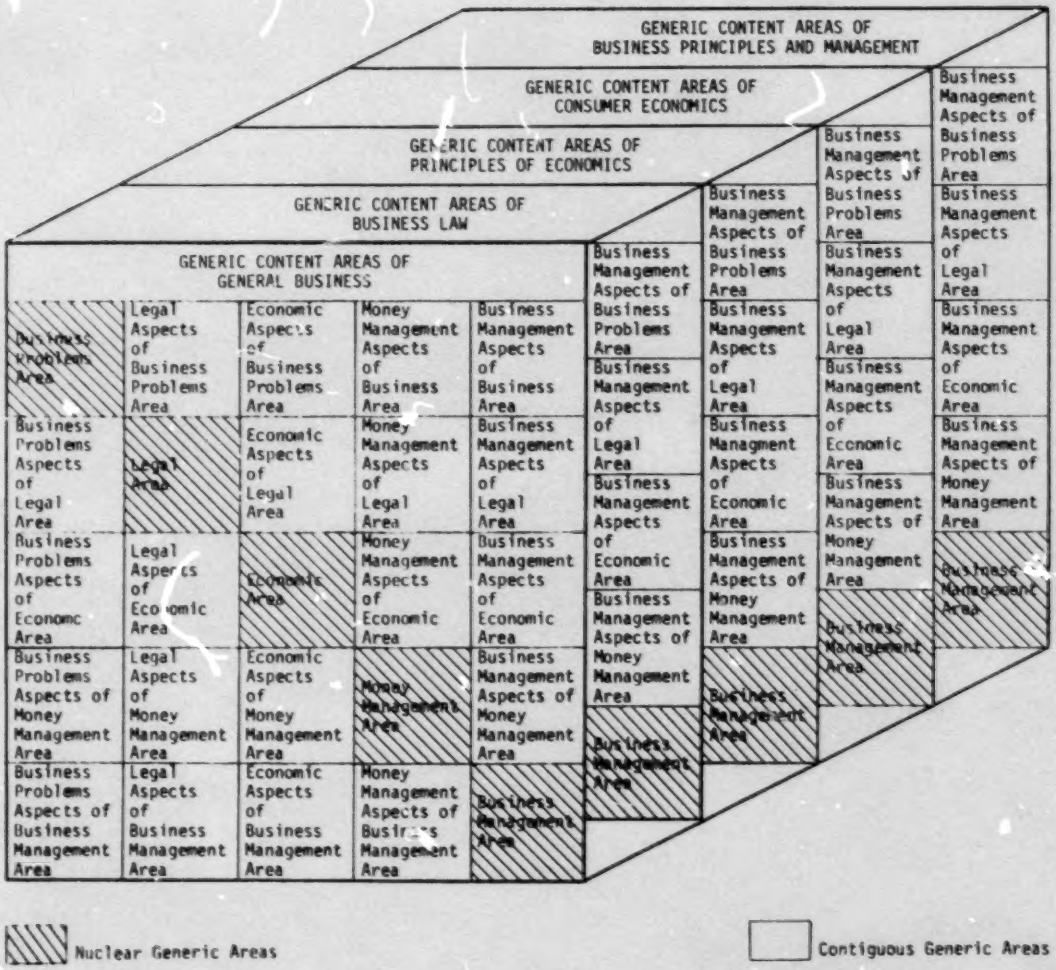
Figure 1. The Relationship of the Nuclear Generic Areas and the Contiguous Generic Areas in the Overall Structure of Basic Business Content

BASIC BUSINESS COURSES	GENERIC CONTENT AREAS IN BASIC BUSINESS EDUCATION				
GENERAL BUSINESS	Business Problems Area	Legal Aspects of Business Problems Area	Economic Aspects of Business Problems Area	Money Management Aspects of Business Problems Area	Business Management Aspects of Business Problems Area
BUSINESS LAW	Business Problems Aspects of Legal Area	Legal Area	Economic Aspects of Legal Area	Money Management Aspects of Legal Area	Business Management Aspects of Legal Area
PRINCIPLES OF ECONOMICS	Business Problems Aspects of Economic Area	Legal Aspects of Economic Area	Economic Area	Money Management Aspects of Economic Area	Business Management Aspects of Economic Area
CONSUMER ECONOMICS	Business Problems Aspects of Money Management Area	Legal Aspects of Money Management Area	Economic Aspects of Money Management Area	Money Management Area	Business Management Aspects of Money Management Area
BUSINESS PRINCIPLES AND MANAGEMENT	Business Problems Aspects of Business Management Area	Legal Aspects of Business Management Area	Economic Aspects of Business Management Area	Money Management Aspects of Business Management Area	Business Management Area

Nuclear Generic Areas

Contiguous Generic Areas

Figure 2. The Structure of Basic Business Education Content as Viewed by the Proponents of Multiple Basic Business Course Offerings


GENERIC CONTENT AREAS OF BUSINESS PRINCIPLES AND MANAGEMENT
GENERIC CONTENT AREAS OF CONSUMER ECONOMICS
GENERIC CONTENT AREAS OF PRINCIPLES OF ECONOMICS
GENERIC CONTENT AREAS OF BUSINESS LAW
GENERIC CONTENT AREAS OF GENERAL BUSINESS
Business Problems Area
Legal Aspects of Business Problems Area
Economic Aspects of Business Problems Area
Money Management Aspects of Business Area
Business Management Aspects of Business Area
Business Problems Aspects of Legal Area
Legal Area
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Business Management Area
Business Management Aspects of Business Problems Area
Business Management Aspects of Legal Area
Business Management Aspects of Economic Area
Business Management Aspects of Money Management Area
Business Management Area
Nuclear Generic Areas
Contiguous Generic Areas

Figure 3. The Structure of Basic Business Education Content as Viewed by Proponents of Consolidated Basic Business Courses

The proponents would also argue that the overlap within each course lies in the four contiguous generic areas corresponding to the nuclear generic area for the course and is distinctively different from the overlap in the contiguous areas of any other basic business course. Therefore, the overlap within the courses is held to be permutative. That is, the order in which contiguous associations are presented is important. For instance, the overlap between the legal and business problems areas in general business is thought to deal with the legal aspects of the business area whereas the overlap between the legal and business problem areas in business law is thought to be concerned with the business problems aspects of the legal area.

Arguments for Consolidated Basic Business Course Offerings

Those who argue that basic business content should be integrated into fewer courses would agree that overlap within the courses does not only exist but that it exists even more extensively than their opponents believe. Overlap within each course occurs in all twenty contiguous generic areas. Further these proponents would argue that duplication within each course is probably more combinative than permutative--the order of the contiguous associations cannot always be determined. For example, one may not be able to determine whether the contiguous generic area comprised of the relationships between the legal and business problem areas is dealing with the legal aspects of a business problem or with the business aspects of a legal problem. Thus, the twenty contiguous generic areas could be, for all practical purposes, collapsed into ten such areas. The proponents would also contend that it is better to speak of the contiguous areas as, for example, the business problems-legal area rather than as the business problems aspects of the legal area or the legal aspects of the business problems area.

The proponents of basic business education as being integrated into fewer courses would hold that extensive overlap exists among the courses with duplication in both the nuclear and contiguous generic areas.

Analysis of the Problem

In order to conclude that basic business content should continue to be offered in the current series of separate courses, the following findings were necessary:

1. The contiguous generic topics areas are permutative; that is, the order of the relationship of two nuclear generic topics consitituting a particular generic topic can be determined.

2. Each basic business course has a concentration of subject matter in a single nuclear generic area.

3. Each basic business course has only contiguous generic areas which are related to the expected single nuclear generic area.

4. The majority of the content in each course falls within the nuclear generic areas.

5. Statistically, there is a significant difference in the content among the basic business courses.

On the other hand, to conclude that further consideration should be given to the consolidation of the basic business content into fewer courses, the following findings were required:

1. The content of the contiguous generic areas is combinative; that is, the direction of the relationship existing between two nuclear generic topics constituting a contiguous generic topic cannot be determined.

2. Each of the courses has a fairly equal distribution of content in all the nuclear generic areas.

3. Each of the basic business courses includes all of the contiguous generic areas.

4. The majority of the content in each course falls within the contiguous generic areas.

5. Statistically, there is no significant difference in the content among the basic business courses.

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

The validity of the study was dependent upon the textbooks being representative of the subject matter in the basic business field and upon the categories selected for classifying the data being appropriate for the type of analysis undertaken. The study was also limited by the researcher's ability to consistently classify the content into the same categories, by the consistency with which others could classify the content into the same categories, and by the consistency with which the textbook authors used comparable numbers of words to state the subject matter.

The study was based on the assumption that textbooks provide the primary source of subject matter for basic business courses. The source of data was delimited to the narrative found in the latest edition of basic business textbooks published by companies offering a separate text for each of the five courses.

Sources of Data

A survey of the publishing companies having textbooks listed in Subject Guide to Books in Print 1973 for the basic business courses revealed that only two publishers, McGraw-Hill Book Company and South-Western Publishing Company, publish texts for all five courses. These latest editions of the textbooks constituted the sources of data:

Business Law

R. Robert Rosenberg and John E. Whitcraft, Understanding Business Law (5th ed.; New York: Gregg Division, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973).

McKee Fisk, Norbert J. Mietus, and James C. Snapp, Applied Business Law (10th ed.; Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Company, 1972).

Business Principles and Management

Herbert A. Tonne, Sidney I. Simon, and Esby C. McGill, Business Principles, Organization, and Management (2nd ed.: New York: Gregg Division, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1963).

Bernard A. Shilt, Kenneth E. Everard, and John M. Johns, Business Principles and Management (6th ed., Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Company, 1973).

Consumer Economics

Herbert M. Jelley and Robert O. Hermann, The American Consumer: Issues and Decisions (New York: Gregg Division, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973).

Roman F. Warmke, Eugene D. Wyllie, W. Harmon Wilson, and Elvin S. Eyster, Consumer Economic Problems (8th ed.; Cincinnati, 1971).

Economics

Harold R. Leith and R. Pierce Lumpkin, Economics USA (New York: Gregg Division, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968).

John W. Kennedy and Arthur R. Olsen, Economics--Principles and Applications (8th ed.; Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Company, 1972).

General Business

Ray G. Price, Vernon A. Musselman, and J. Curtis Hall, General Business for Everyday Living (4th ed.; New York: Gregg Division, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972).

S. Joseph DeBrum, Peter G. Haines, Dean R. Malsbary, and Ernest H. Crabbe, General Business for Economic Understanding, (10 ed.; Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Company, 1971).

Procedures for Processing and Analyzing the Data

Using prior research findings and thought from the professional literature, five major topical areas were identified for classifying the content in the field of basic business. These were Business Problems Topics, Money Management Topics, Legal Topics, Business Management Topics, and Economic Topics. They were called nuclear generic topics because they form the nuclei of the basic business content and had their genesis in established fields of study and disciplines. A sixth category, Miscellaneous Topics, was added so that the classification of the content in the textbooks could be exhaustive.

It was observed that basic business content not only deals with the principles and concepts pertaining to the nature of the nuclear generic topics, but it also deals with the relationships which exist among these topics. Thus, the interrelationships which are discussed in the basic business content and which are derived from the contiguous associations of the nuclear generic areas were called contiguous generic topics.

A total of 21 major categories (6 nuclear generic and 15 contiguous generic categories) were used to classify the topics found in the selected textbooks. The nuclear generic categories were:

1. Business Problems Topics
2. Money Management Topics
3. Legal Topics
4. Business Management Topics
5. Economic Topics

The contiguous generic categories were:

1. Money Management-Business Problems Topics
2. Legal-Business Problems Topics
3. Business Management-Business Problems Topics
4. Economic-Business Problems Topics
5. Miscellaneous-Business Problems Topics
6. Legal-Money Management Topics
7. Business Management-Money Management Topics
8. Economic-Money Management Topics
9. Miscellaneous-Money Management Topics
10. Business Management-Legal Topics
11. Economic-Legal Topics
12. Miscellaneous-Legal Topics
13. Economic-Business Management Topics
14. Miscellaneous-Business Management Topics
15. Miscellaneous-Economic Topics

The nuclear topics were next divided into 75 subtopics. These subtopics and their possible combinations were used to construct a coding matrix for classifying the content in the texts.

The content in the texts was divided into context units or topics. Each context unit was assigned a category code number and the words in each context unit were counted.

A data card containing the book identification number, page number, context unit number, category code number, and word count was punched for each context unit. A computer was used to process the data for each course, each text, and each publisher. The data were analyzed on the bases of the 21 nuclear and contiguous categories only. Three types of statistical treatments were used: (1) summations, (2) proportions, and (3) tests of significance of differences.

Summary of the Findings

With one card being punched for each context unit, a total of 17,265 data cards were punched and processed. A summary of the number of context units, the number of words, and the mean of words in the context units appears in Table 1.

The number of context units ranged from a low of 1,227 in Business Principles Organization,and Management (Gregg/McGraw-Hill) to a high of 2,558 in Consumer Economic Problems (South-Western). The mean for the number of context units in the textbooks was 1,726.5.

Table 1. Number of Context Units, Number of Words, and Mean of Words in Context Units by Textbooks

Textbook Title	Publisher	Number of Content Units	Number of Words	Mean of Words in Textbook's Context Units
Understanding Business Law	Gregg/McGraw-Hill	1,283	123,175	96.0
Applied Business Law	South-Western	1,602	150,933	94.2
Business Principles, Organization, and Management	Gregg/McGraw-Hill	1,227	141,590	115.4
Business Principles and Management	South-Western	1,392	142,090	102.1
The American Consumer. Issues and Decisions	Gregg/McGraw-Hill	1,423	142,474	100.1
Consumer Economic Problems	South-Western	2,558	153,753	60.1
Economics USA	Gregg/McGraw-Hill	1,844	157,276	85.3
Economics--Principles and Applications	South-Western	2,290	152,342	66.5
General Business for Everyday Living	Gregg/McGraw-Hill	1,552	109,841	70.8
General Business for Economic Understanding	South-Western	2,094	104,523	49.9
Total		17,265	1,377,997	840.4
Mean		1,726.5	137,799.7	84.0

The textbook published for each course by Gregg/McGraw-Hill had fewer context units than did the textbook published by South-Western.

The ten textbooks analyzed contained a total of 1,377,997 words. The number of words per textbook ranged from a low of 104,523 in General Business for Economic Understanding (South-Western) to a high of 157,276 in Economics USA (Gregg/McGraw-Hill). The mean number of words per textbook was 137,799.7. As might be expected, both textbooks for the general business course which is commonly offered in grades 9 and 10 contained fewer words than did the texts for the other courses which are more frequently offered in grades 11 and 12.

When the number of words in each textbook was divided by the number of context units in the book to find the mean of words in the textbook's context units, the range in the mean was from 49.92 to 115.40 words. The textbook having the lowest mean of words per context unit was General Business for Economic Understanding (South-Western). The one with the highest was Business Principles, Organization, and Management (Gregg/McGraw-Hill). The overall mean--that is, the average number of words for a context unit in the ten textbooks--was 79.81 words. In each case, the textbook published by South-Western for each course had a lower mean than did the textbook published by Gregg/McGraw-Hill.

The number of words in the context units is an indicator of the amount of discussion provided for a single topic before another topic is introduced. This means that the content in some textbooks switched topics frequently; the content in others gave more treatment to a topic before moving to a second one.

A summary of the proportion of generic content found in the textbooks for each of the courses and in all the textbooks combined is shown in Table 2.

The finding did not form a clearcut pattern that irrefutably supported either the position that basic business education should continue to be offered as a series of separate courses or the position that they should be consolidated into fewer courses.

Certain findings indicate there is some merit in offering the current series of five basic business courses:

1. Some contiguous content was permutative. During the testing of a coding matrix based on a classification system accommodating permutations, it was found that the direction of some of the relationships which existed between the topics in the contiguous generic content could be determined.

2. Four of the five courses had a concentration of nuclear generic content in a single, expected nuclear generic area. Business principles and management textbooks had a concentration of content in the Business Management Topics (52.44 percent), business law textbooks had a concentration in Legal Topics (34.19 percent), economics textbooks had a concentration in Economic Topics (30.68 percent), and general business textbooks had a concentration in the Business Problems Topics (14.98 percent). While all the concentrations except the business principles and management textbooks represented less than 50 percent of the total content in the textbooks, the concentrations did represent a majority of the nuclear generic content in the business principles and management textbooks (86.74 percent), in the business law textbooks (73.80 percent), and in the economics textbooks (62.37 percent).

Table 2. Proportions of Generic Content Found in Textbooks for Each Course and in All Textbooks Combined

Type of Generic Category	Generic Category	Percentages					
		Business Law Textbooks	Business Principles Textbooks	Consumer Economics Textbooks	Economics Textbooks	General Business Textbooks	All Textbooks Combined
Nuclear Generic Categories	11 - Business Problems Topics	6.41	4.19	12.48	2.55	14.98	7.72
	22 - Money Management Topics	1.04	.67	9.41	2.93	14.29	5.27
	33 - Legal Topics	34.19	.79	3.12	.08	1.50	7.87
	44 - Business Management Topics	4.08	52.44	4.13	8.93	7.44	15.68
	55 - Economic Topics	.30	2.06	8.76	30.68	9.15	10.67
	66 - Miscellaneous Topics	.31	.32	.61	4.02	1.13	1.33
Contiguous Generic Categories	12 - Money Management-Business Problems Topics	2.25	2.26	10.27	2.37	8.40	5.00
	13 - Legal-Business Problems Topics	19.10	3.30	7.38	.99	5.72	7.17
	14 - Business Management-Business Problems Topics	1.43	12.95	2.85	1.58	4.26	4.57
	15 - Economic-Business Problems Topics	.07	.24	1.60	2.91	2.05	1.37
	16 - Miscellaneous-Business Problems Topics	1.64	1.20	6.57	2.56	6.34	3.55
	23 - Legal-Money Management Topics	6.95	.69	2.82	.18	2.20	2.51
	24 - Business Management-Money Management Topics	.77	2.82	4.82	1.39	4.29	2.76
	25 - Economic-Money Management Topics	.05	.30	2.55	3.05	2.43	1.68
	26 - Miscellaneous-Money Management Topics	.46	.53	7.73	1.92	3.84	2.91
	34 - Business Management-Legal Topics	14.33	4.36	2.28	.95	1.86	4.75
	35 - Economic-Legal Topics	.44	.50	1.03	2.85	.41	1.11
	36 - Miscellaneous-Legal Topics	4.71	.26	.37	.44	.62	1.26
	45 - Economic-Business Management Topics	.10	2.79	3.07	6.34	2.08	3.00
	46 - Miscellaneous-Business Management Topics	.97	6.10	2.49	3.36	2.37	3.11
	56 - Miscellaneous-Economic Topics	.41	1.25	5.69	19.90	4.64	6.73

3. Four of the five courses had a concentration of contiguous generic content in the contiguous generic categories related to the expected nuclear generic area. Only consumer economics did not have a concentration of contiguous generic content in the contiguous categories related to the expected nuclear generic category. While the proportions in the business law textbooks (45.52 percent), economics textbooks (35.06 percent), business principles and management textbooks (29.01 percent), and general business textbooks (26.77 percent) represented less than half of the total content in the textbooks, they did in all cases represent a majority of the nuclear generic content (84.81, 69.00, 73.37, and 51.96 percent respectively).

4. Slightly less than half (48.53 percent) of the total content was nuclear generic content. While three courses--business law (46.33 percent), economics (49.19 percent), and general business (48.48 percent)--had only slightly less than half the content in the nuclear generic areas, business principles and management had 60.46 percent in these areas. Consumer economics had 38.50 percent.

5. Statistically, a significant difference at the .01 level existed in almost all the proportion of generic content categories when compared by textbook, by course, and by publisher. When the textbooks for one course were compared with the textbooks for each of the other courses using z-scores, seven of the course comparisons were significantly different at the .01 level in all the proportions of generic content in all the categories. Only three course comparisons had proportions in generic categories which were not significantly different. Of these, the largest number of categories in the course comparison having no significant difference was three.

Other findings supported the position that further consideration should be given to the consolidation of content into fewer courses.

1. Some contiguous content was combinative. The direction of the relationships among the topics in the contiguous generic areas could not be determined in many instances; therefore, it was necessary to use a combinative classification system.

2. Each of the five courses had content in all six of the nuclear generic areas. The nuclear generic content was widely distributed among the nuclear generic categories with the widest distribution in the consumer economics textbooks and the least in the business principles and management textbooks. This wide distribution of content in all the nuclear generic areas indicates that duplication of content among the courses does exist among all the courses. Comparatively large proportions of content in each of the nuclear generic categories were found in two or more courses.

3. Each of the five courses had content in all 15 contiguous generic areas. The contiguous generic content was widely distributed among the nuclear generic categories. While the contiguous generic content tended to be concentrated in the categories that were related to the expected nuclear generic category for each course, some of the unrelated contiguous generic categories contained proportions of content which were as large as some of the related ones. The wide distribution of content in all the contiguous generic areas indicates that overlap also exists among all the courses. Like the nuclear content, comparatively large proportions of content in each of the contiguous categories were found in two or more courses.

4. A majority of the content in the textbooks was contiguous generic content. The proportion of contiguous generic content represented a majority (51.47 percent) of the total content. This reflects a substantial amount of overlap of content within the courses.

Conclusion

While the findings are mixed, those in favor of the position that further consideration should be given to the consolidation of basic business content into fewer courses outweigh those in favor of the continued offering of the current series of separate basic business courses. The fact that the content in the field of basic business is almost evenly divided between nuclear and contiguous generic content and the fact that the content within each course is widely distributed among all the nuclear and contiguous generic categories indicates that there is extensive overlap both within and among the courses. The large proportions of contiguous content indicate that substantial overlap exists within the courses. The wide distribution of both nuclear and contiguous generic content in each course affirms that considerable overlap exists among the courses. In addition, the nature of the contiguous content is both permutative and combinative.

Since the present basic business courses have extensive duplication of content, a further consolidation of the content into fewer courses seems to be a possibility; and further consideration of this possibility is warranted.

Observations

Several findings which resulted from the analysis of the textbook content, but which were not relevant to the solution of the problem in this study, are interesting observations.

One of these observations is that the textbook content was confined mainly to five nuclear generic categories--Business Problems Topics, Money Management Topics, Legal Topics, Business Management Topics, and Economic Topics--and to the 15 contiguous generic categories. Only 1.33 percent of the combined content fell in Miscellaneous Topics. Similarly, each of the courses had very small proportions in the Miscellaneous topics category. This suggest that the five nuclear generic areas and the contiguous generic areas constitute a substantial and cohesive body of knowledge for basic business education.

A second observation was that, while there is duplication of generic topics among the courses, the overlap is more extensive in some textbooks than in others. The difference in proportions of generic content found in the textbooks provides the teacher with alternatives in choosing a textbook. The proportions indicate the extent to which topics in the various areas are covered. If a teacher wishes to stress certain topics, the proportions reported in this study can serve as a guide to selecting textbooks for further examination.

The business principles and management textbooks contained the largest proportions of unique content. As indicated by the proportions of content found in the expected nuclear generic area and the related contiguous generic areas, the business principles and management textbooks contained much content in these

topical areas which was not found in the other texts. Over half of the total content in the textbooks was in the expected nuclear generic category, Business Management Topics. The content in the contiguous generic areas closely corresponded to those categories which related Business Management Topics to the other nuclear generic topics.

The consumer economics textbooks contained the widest and most even distributions of both nuclear and contiguous content among the generic categories. These textbooks are most representative of the total basic business content.

Implications and Recommendations

The findings in this study, which led to the conclusion that further consideration of the consolidation of content is warranted, also lead to certain implications about the nature of the restructuring of basic business content which should probably occur.

An overall implication of the study is that attention should be given to restructuring both the content within and among the basic business courses. Finding that very little content--only 1.33 percent of the total content--was classified in the Miscellaneous Topics category implies that the content in the basic business field constitutes a unified and cohesive body of knowledge. Thus, the need is not so much for adding new knowledge to the field of basic business as it is for refining the existing knowledge.

Finding that the content in all the basic business textbooks combined was almost equally divided implies that attention should probably be given to the refinement of both the nuclear and contiguous generic content. Refinement of the content will probably come (1) through careful identification and selection of topics, principles, and concepts which are imperative for understanding the nature of the five nuclear generic areas--business law, business management, money management, economics, and business problems--and (2) through careful discernment and statement of the relationships which exist among the nuclear generic areas and thus constitute the subject matter for the contiguous generic areas.

Continued efforts must be made to identify and to select the knowledges, attitudes, and skills an individual must have in the areas of business law, economics, business management, money management, and business problems if an individual is to participate efficiently and effectively in business activity. But just improving the foundational subject matter in the nuclear generic areas will not be sufficient. Equally important is the understanding of the relationship of each nuclear generic area to the others. In other words, understanding the nature of business problems is not enough for conducting business affairs effectively and efficiently. Such isolated knowledge of business problems is seldom needed; business problems are generally encountered in some particular context. Thus, in addition to understanding the nature of business problems, an individual also needs to understand the legal aspects of the problems, the economic aspects of the problems, the money management aspects of the problem, and the business management aspects of the problems. Improvements will be made in the structure of the basic business content as refinements in these relationships are made.

Due to the high degree of repetition, the content in the five basic business courses could probably be offered in fewer courses. Two courses would probably be sufficient for offering basic business as general education for all secondary school students. A possible sequence might be a two-semester basic business course for ninth- and tenth-grade students and a two-semester advanced basic business course for eleventh- and twelfth-grade students.

It was found that 81.45 percent of the content in the business principles and management textbooks fell in the expected nuclear generic category and the related contiguous generic categories. This percentage seems disproportionately high when compared to the percentage of content falling in the expected nuclear generic categories and related contiguous generic categories in the textbooks for other courses. This may indicate the content pertaining to Business Management Topics includes specialized information needed only by those students preparing for jobs or occupations where a specialized knowledge of business management principles is needed as well as general information about business management that is needed by all students. If this is the case, there is probably sufficient content to offer a one-semester course for those students needing a specialized knowledge of business management principles.

Because further consideration of the consolidation of basic business content into fewer courses is warranted and because this consolidation requires the restructuring of content both within and among the courses, further research and developmental work is recommended.

The needed research includes comprehensive studies of basic business content using:

1. Other basic business textbooks not included in this study as sourses of data.

2. Sources of data other than textbooks (such as syllabi, courses of study, and supplementary materials).

3. Facts, principles, concepts, and other categories as units of analysis.

The first two recommended studies would help determine whether the textbooks used in this study were representative of the content in basic business education. The last one would help determine whether the same principles and concepts are covered in the topical areas which this study found were duplicated among the courses.

In the way of developmental work, business educators need to devise a better taxonomy for basic business content. The major topics used in this study to classify the content were those identified from research findings and thought in the professional literature. They bear a close resemblance to those topics found in the established fields of study or disciplines from which they were derived. While these major topics constitute the main body of knowledge in basic business education, an alternative taxonomy of topics needs to be developed. Such a taxonomy should classify the content into categories which are more parallel than the traditional ones and should allow for innovation in sequencing and structuring basic business content.

Finally, there is a real need for business educators to plan, implement, and evaluate basic business education programs which make it feasible for students to have a more balanced approach to the study of all the content areas of basic business than is now possible with the multiple-course programs. To consolidate the content into fewer courses would also require the reorganization of instructional materials and probably the development of new ones. By having a two- or three-course sequence, basic business could be better fitted into crowded high school curricula and would more likely become a required part of all students' general education.

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